



Uinta National Forest

Land and Resource Management Plan Revision

Newsletter No. 2

July 2001

Letter From the Forest Supervisor

Dear Uinta National Forest stakeholders:

The Uinta National Forest has been working to revise its Land and Resource Management Plan (also referred to as the Forest Plan). Public scoping was initiated in September 1999 with release of the Preliminary Analysis of the Management Situation for the Uinta National Forest. Issues identified through review of public comments were used to formulate three preliminary alternatives. Open houses were held in February and March 2000, allowing the public an opportunity to review the alternatives and determine if we had identified all the issues, and if the alternatives we had developed addressed the issues. At these meetings, you provided additional comments and suggested we add at least one alternative. We added three additional alternatives. We are now analyzing six alternatives.

Since initiating the Forest Plan revision process, we have received a range of comments on many issues, particularly regarding areas recommended for wilderness designation and the maintenance of current resource use opportunities across the Forest.

In regard to wilderness recommendations, one question that came up repeatedly was, "If the areas we're proposing for wilderness designation were not proposed in the Utah Wilderness Act of 1984, what makes them eligible now?" First, there have been changes in social values and general public demand for wilderness; second, the Utah Wilderness Act of 1984 and the National Forest Management Act of 1976 require a reevaluation of roadless areas for wilderness recommendation as part of all forest plan revisions; and third, recommending roadless

areas for wilderness designation responds to specific public comments regarding areas believed to be candidates for wilderness.

Protecting our natural resources while maintaining current resource use opportunities across the Forest is difficult at best. However, with revised standards and guidelines, we believe we can maintain most current uses, at somewhat reduced levels in some areas, and meet resource management objectives under either of the preferred alternatives.

Identifying a preferred alternative has been challenging. Because both Alternatives B and D seem able to meet most resource management objectives, I have identified both as preferred alternatives. The primary differences between the two alternatives are areas recommended for wilderness and areas considered suitable for livestock grazing. A brief description of the two preferred alternatives along with the other alternatives considered begins on page 4 of this newsletter. A more detailed description of all the alternatives can be found in Chapter 2 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

Both Alternatives B and D are included in the Draft Forest Plan. I encourage you to review and comment on both the DEIS and the Draft Forest Plan. To be most helpful your comments should be specific. Normally, comments must be provided during the 90-day comment period, which began upon publication of the Notice of Availability for the DEIS and Draft Revised Forest Plan in the Federal Register on May 4, 2001, and would have concluded on August 2, 2001. However, I have decided to extend this comment period after receiving a request for extension. **The extended comment period ends on Tuesday, September 4, 2001.**



Comments received in response to this solicitation will be part of the public record and available for public review pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act 5 U.S.C. 552, and may be released to the public upon request. This will include names, addresses, and any other personal information provided with your comments.

If you would like further information or have any questions on the Forest Plan revision process or the draft documents, please contact Marlene DePietro, Forest Plan Revision Team Leader, at 801-342-5161. Thank you for your interest in the Uinta National Forest.

Sincerely,

PETER W. KARP
Forest Supervisor

Obtaining Copies of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) or Draft Forest Plan

The DEIS, Draft Forest Plan, and associated documents are available on the Uinta National Forest's website at
<www.fs.fed.us/r4/uinta/forest_plan_toc.htm>.

Copies of the documents may also be obtained at any of the following locations:

Supervisor's Office
88 West 100 North
Provo, Utah 84601

Pleasant Grove Ranger District
390 North 100 East
Pleasant Grove, Utah 84062

Heber Ranger District
2460 South Highway 40
Heber, Utah 84032

Spanish Fork Ranger District
44 West 400 North
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660

Copies may also be obtained by contacting Andi Bauer at 801-342-5162, or by email at
<abauer01@fs.fed.us>.

When requesting documents, please specify which of the following you would like to receive:

Draft Forest Plan (458 pages)
DEIS (664 pages)
DEIS Appendices (806 pages)
DEIS Executive Summary (37 pages)
Alternatives Map Packet
CD-ROM (contains all documents and maps)

How To Comment

Comments on the DEIS and/or Draft Forest Plan may be submitted to:

Forest Supervisor
Uinta National Forest
88 West 100 North
P.O. Box 1428
Provo UT 84603-1428

Comments may also be submitted by email to
<abauer01@fs.fed.us>.

Open Houses

Four open houses were held June 7, 12, 13, and 14, 2001, in Payson, Lehi, Nephi, and Heber, respectively. Members of the public attended to ask questions about the Forest Plan revision effort and obtain copies of revision documents.

Individuals or groups who were unable to attend one of the open houses may contact Marlene DePietro, Forest Plan Revision Team Leader, at 801-342-5100 to ask questions or to arrange a meeting to discuss their questions and concerns.



Revision Topics

During the revision process a significant amount of time has been devoted by the public and the Forest Service to identifying and validating the needs for change and issues related to the revision of the Uinta's Forest Plan. These needs for change and issues were consolidated into a list of seven revision topics, which were used to develop the six alternatives evaluated. The seven revision topics are described briefly below.

Recreation/Recreation Access. The majority of the public who submitted comments were against limiting motorized recreation use. Their concerns centered on maintaining accessibility for the elderly and disabled and continuing to have public lands open and available for all uses. Other members of the public have called for more restrictions on motorized recreation use. They believe that any increase in acreage open for motorized use will lead to a continued degradation of Forest resources and will decrease opportunities for solitude.

Larger numbers of recreation users, a widening range of activities, and increasing use of the backcountry have resulted in greater impacts to the environment, overuse of some recreational facilities, and increase in user conflicts. The challenge facing the Uinta National Forest is to protect environmental values while providing quality recreation experiences.

Roadless/Wilderness. Approximately 58,400 acres, or 6 percent, of the Uinta National Forest has been placed in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Approximately 555,000 acres, or 62 percent, of the remaining acres on the Forest meet the definition of roadless as defined in the Forest Service Handbook. During this revision process, the Forest was inventoried to identify roadless areas and assess whether they met the criteria for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Forest Service policy and federal regulations require that roadless areas be considered for wilderness designation during the forest planning process.

Some people favor the backcountry, non-motorized experience provided by wilderness designation, and are concerned that the integrity of the ecosystem will be disrupted by development and motorized vehicle use. Others oppose wilderness recommendations in favor of motorized recreation, timber, mining, grazing, and other commodity uses for those areas.

Biodiversity/Viability. Biodiversity is the variety and abundance of life and its processes, including all living organisms, the genetic differences among them, and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur. Biodiversity also refers to the composition, structures, and functions of species and habitats and their interactions.

Many concepts of biodiversity are relatively new and were therefore not fully addressed in the 1984 Forest Plan. Since the implementation of the 1984 Forest Plan, the Forest Service has embraced an ecosystem-based approach to resource management. Recent policies and precedents have provided new guidance for maintaining biodiversity. Sensitive species have been identified, and Forest managers have been directed to help ensure viable populations of all native and desirable non-native species.

At the same time, a growing public demands management that accommodates a variety of uses of the Forest. There is a concern about maintaining a diverse, healthy, productive, and sustainable ecosystem while determining the proper balance of management and land use activities. While some people would like to see the Uinta National Forest managed as a habitat sanctuary preserve, others would like to see management focused on the implementation of approved species recovery plans, the incorporation of established conservation measures, and additions to the list of Management Indicator Species.

Air/Watershed/Water Quality. The majority of streams and reservoirs on the Uinta National Forest provide water for domestic and agricultural uses, cold-water fisheries, recreation, livestock, and wildlife. One of the main reasons the Uinta



National Forest was first established in 1897 was to protect watersheds. In addition to the emphasis on watershed protection in the Natural Resource Agenda goals, the Forest has an added responsibility to protect the watersheds of the surrounding communities.

Because of a rapidly growing local population, potential impacts to air, watershed, and water quality are of critical importance. Some members of the public believe increased use and access to the backcountry and the disposal of human waste will result in a potential threat to water quality. Others believe there is a compelling need for the Forest to protect all streams, wetlands, and riparian areas. The challenge facing the Uinta National Forest is to maintain or improve air and water quality while managing for an appropriate balance of Forest uses.

Social/Economic. A large segment of the public is apprehensive about the social and economic impact of potential changes in management and subsequent use of the Uinta National Forest as a result of Forest Plan revision. Many members of the public do not want Forest Plan decisions to have a detrimental effect on the local quality of life; they desire that the associated economic effects be generally beneficial. Some members of the public define beneficial effects as maintaining or expanding commodity uses of the Forest such as mineral developments and timber harvest. Others believe that decreasing or discontinuing commodity uses would be the best use of the Forest.

Monitoring/Evaluation. All monitoring-related issues will be addressed through development of the required monitoring plan. Although this is not really an issue statement (as monitoring and evaluation is one of the six decision made in forest plans), it does reflect concerns raised by the public. Some members of the public are concerned the Uinta National Forest is not monitoring the correct resources to determine if current management is adequately protecting or improving forest resources. In addition, some people believe the Forest is not monitoring at a level necessary for the data to be credible. Others expressed concern that the Forest would be

unable to increase either the monitoring quantity or frequency given the Forest's difficulty in accomplishing current monitoring requirements.

Lands: Property Boundary Management.

Points of access to the Uinta National Forest are being lost as a result of private land development and urban sprawl adjacent to the Forest. Additionally, as these private lands are developed, the lack of an identifiable Forest boundary is resulting in trespass problems such as private structures or facilities being built on the Forest. Private inholdings also contribute to trespass problems when developments built on these lands cross onto the Forest.

Alternatives Analyzed

The following alternatives were developed to address public issues and identified needs for change. A brief description of each alternative follows. Pie charts illustrating the distribution of management prescriptions to address public issues and needs for change can be found following the descriptions. A complete description of the alternatives is located in Chapter 2 of the DEIS.

Alternative A. Alternative A is an updated no action alternative. Forest Service direction for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) states that a no action alternative be considered in detail in each environmental analysis. No action means that the management allocations, activities, and management direction found in the 1984 Forest Plan would continue for the next 10 to 15 years. This alternative does contain some changes to the existing Forest Plan, such as the inclusion of updated information as a result of new technology (e.g., more accurate GIS information) and changes in land ownership, clarification of the existing management prescriptions, and deletion of administrative and procedural standards and guidelines. Direction in Conservation Strategies and Agreements would continue to be followed, but standards and guidelines from these



documents would not be incorporated directly into the Forest Plan.

Management areas and management intent from the 1984 Forest Plan would not change. The Forest would be managed to provide a sustainable flow of resources for human use, protect important watersheds, provide for viable populations of native and desirable non-native flora and fauna, provide wildlife habitat, and provide opportunities for recreation use. Management direction would generally be broad and accommodate a wide variety of values and uses.

Inventoried roadless areas are those identified in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the 1984 Forest Plan. The Roadless Area Conservation Rule (RACR) would not be applied to roadless areas in this alternative.

Alternative B. This alternative strongly emphasizes maintenance of watershed conditions, species viability, terrestrial and aquatic habitats, properly functioning ecosystems, and roadless area conservation.

Additions to existing wilderness areas would be recommended where they would improve the manageability of the area and not cause serious conflict with other uses. One new wilderness area would be recommended, Cascade Mountain. The total additional acreage recommended for wilderness designation would be 30,420 acres.

Implementation of RACR would restrict road construction, reconstruction, and timber harvest activities within inventoried roadless areas (approximately 555,000 acres). As a result, the acreage from which forest products would be produced is reduced, along with a corresponding reduction in the Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) for timber harvest.

Two vacant sheep allotments on the Pleasant Grove Ranger District and the Strawberry Project lands would be classified as not suitable for livestock grazing.

Four eligible wild and scenic river segments on the Uinta National Forest would be managed to maintain their eligibility for recommendation into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

Social and economic values and uses would be maintained to the extent compatible with these emphases. Needs for change and issues associated with dispersed recreation management would be addressed by focusing some developments where facilities currently exist and where current demand and use trends indicate a need for more intensive management. Opportunities for commodity production (timber harvest, livestock grazing, and mineral development) would be maintained where consistent with the emphasis for this alternative.

Alternative C. This alternative places an increased emphasis on species viability, aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and protection of soil productivity and water quality.

Roadless areas would be adjusted to include areas recommended by the public for a total of approximately 594,300 acres. Emphasis would be placed on conserving the undeveloped characteristics of these areas.

Several additions to existing wilderness areas would be recommended. Additions to the Mount Nebo Wilderness Area would encompass nearly the entire Nebo Unit. One new wilderness area would be recommended, Cascade Mountain. Approximately 70 percent of the Forest would be managed as wilderness or protected as roadless in this alternative.

Acres open to motorized/mechanized use would be reduced by wilderness recommendations and increased restrictions on motorized recreation opportunities.

Two vacant sheep allotments on the Pleasant Grove Ranger District and the Strawberry Project lands would be classified as not suitable for livestock grazing.

Four eligible wild and scenic river segments on the Uinta National Forest would be managed to



maintain their eligibility for recommendation into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

Alternative D. This alternative was developed to address needs for change and issues related to maintaining heli-skiing, motorized recreation, and commodity uses within the capability of the resource to support these activities. It is basically the same as Alternative B except as discussed below.

Alternative D contains no wilderness recommendations.

The two vacant sheep allotments on the Pleasant Grove Ranger District would be classified as suitable for grazing. Grazing would also be allowed on the Strawberry Project lands, but only upon the determination that vegetation and watershed resources have reached desired conditions as specified in the 1990 Record of Decision for the Strawberry Valley Management Area.

Alternative E. This alternative was developed in response to public input related to management of the inventoried roadless areas on the Forest. All inventoried and public identified roadless areas (approximately 594,300 acres, or 66 percent of the Forest) would be recommended for wilderness designation.

Acres open to motorized recreation would be reduced by wilderness recommendations and the application of restrictions on motorized recreation opportunities. Road construction, reconstruction, and timber harvest activities would be severely restricted. As a result, the ASQ would be reduced. Two vacant sheep allotments on the Pleasant Grove Ranger District and the Strawberry Project lands would be classified as not suitable for livestock grazing.

This alternative places an increased emphasis on species viability, aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and protection of soil productivity and water quality.

Four eligible wild and scenic river segments on the Uinta National Forest would be managed to

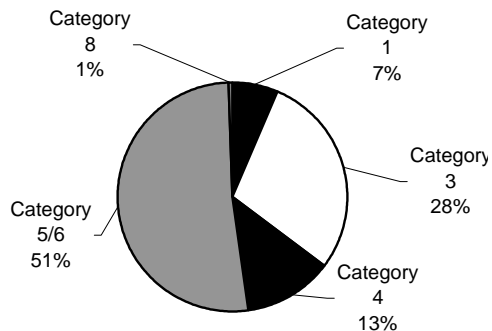
maintain their eligibility for recommendation into the National Wild and Scenic River System.

Alternative F. Alternative F is the same as Alternative A except that roadless area boundaries have been adjusted since RARE II to reflect current conditions. Provisions of RACR would be applied to the management of roadless areas in this alternative.

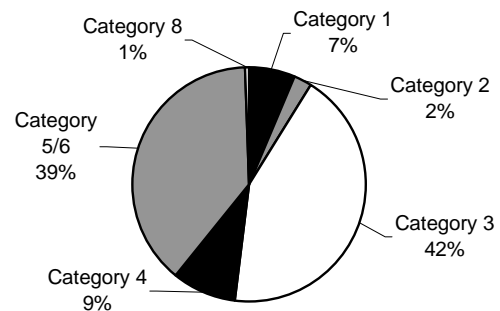
The management allocations, activities, and management direction found in the 1984 Forest Plan, as amended, would continue for the next 10 to 15 years. Management would adhere to the prohibitions identified in RACR. The Forest would be managed to supply a sustainable flow of resources for human use, protect important watersheds, provide viable populations of native and desirable non-native flora and fauna, provide wildlife habitat, and present opportunities for recreation use. Management direction would generally be broad and accommodate a wide variety of values and uses.



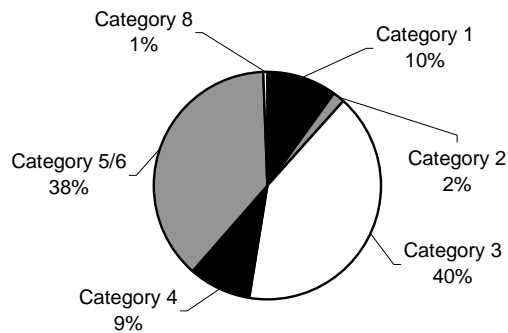
Alternative A



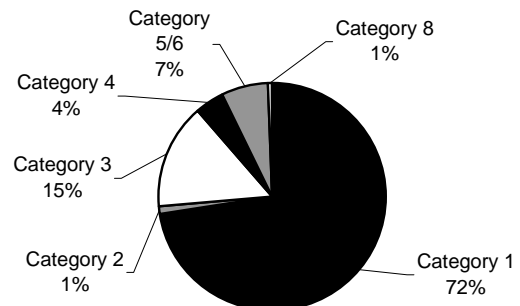
Alternative D



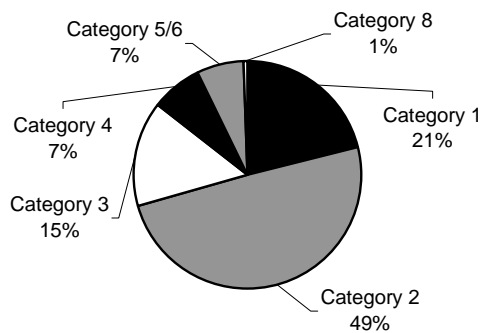
Alternative B



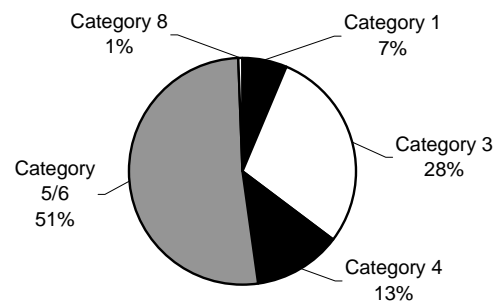
Alternative E



Alternative C



Alternative F



Management Prescriptions

Category 1: Wilderness	Category 5: Multiple Resource Uses in Forested Ecosystems
Category 2: Special Management Areas	Category 6: Multiple Resource Uses in Non-Forested Ecosystems
Category 3: Protection of Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Hydrologic Integrity	Category 7: Urban/Rural Interface
Category 4: Recreation	Category 8: Long-Term Use or Occupancy



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Uinta National Forest
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88 W 100 N
Provo UT 84603-1428

Address Service Requested



Uinta National Forest
Forest Plan Revision Update

COMMENT PERIOD EXTENDED

ALL PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT (DEIS) AND DRAFT FOREST PLAN ARE NOW DUE:

SEPTEMBER 4, 2001